

Tutor Program Tip - Working with College Professors

Professors are the primary source of information and assistance for any college course.

Students are encouraged to meet with professors to discuss problems encountered with course material, or even to share something of particular interest the professor discussed.

Students are sometimes reluctant to work with their professors for various reasons. Perhaps they feel intimidated, are unsure of what to ask, are afraid to admit they are having trouble or they have not been putting the time and effort into the course. As resources, professors are willing to meet and discuss course topics, test grades, and career-related issues. Remember each professor is unique and will interact with students differently.

Here are some helpful hints for approaching and working with your professors:

Visit your professor during his/her office hours

Avoid trying to approach professors right before or after class because they are often going to/from another class and may be in a rush. Ask to schedule an appointment to make sure he/she is available and not with another student. Be sure to be prompt and have questions ready. If you must cancel an appointment, be courteous and call in advance to inform your professor. Take along your textbook, lecture notes, handouts, syllabus, and anything else related to the course. This is especially necessary if you have specific questions.

Be professional and courteous

Use appropriate language, whether speaking in class or corresponding via email. When talking directly to a professor, speak up and look at them. Make sure you know how to pronounce your professor's name.

Listen attentively, take notes, ask questions

Feedback given should not be taken as a personal affront but as constructive guidance for successful completion of the course. The ability to accept and learn from constructive feedback is an essential life/learning skill.

Be attentive and participate in class

This includes showing up on time, paying attention to the lecture, being involved in discussions, turning off your cell phone, and not getting distracted by friends/computer. If you utilize a computer to take notes, make sure that is the only task you are using it for (disregard checking emails, getting on Facebook or Youtube, etc.).

Stick to the syllabus

Do homework when scheduled and plan ahead for major projects and exams. With a syllabus, there is no excuse for not completing your work. **Reading through the syllabus will often answer some questions you may have.**

Missing a class

Make the effort to get lecture notes from a fellow student, review and clarify those notes, and read the associated material in the text. After missing a class and getting notes, approach the professor to ask if there was anything else you may have missed. Key exam information will be given at classes before and after breaks and attendance may be taken, so make sure not to extend your breaks unnecessarily.

Teaching and learning is a two-way process

Attending classes, arriving on time, doing your homework, informing professors of an absence ahead of time, and participating in class discussions are responsibilities of the student. The communication skills learned and practiced with professors will be invaluable as students progress in their intended majors and careers.